

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on January 6, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,006,215 to Retallick ("Retallick"). In this response, Applicants amend claims 1, 9, 17 and 18 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicants' invention. Support for the claim amendments are provided in the specification, particularly, page 8, lines 15-17. The amendments add no new matter. As a result, claims 1-18 are pending. Further examination and review in view of the amendments and remarks below are respectfully requested.

Applicants' techniques are directed to providing collaboration among workers. In some cases, the collaboration occurs through the sharing of smaller tasks among the workers, also referred to as resources, involved in a larger project. Responsibility for tasks, also referred as task ownership, can be delegated from a project manager to the resources working on the project. Moreover, any resource may delegate a task to any other resource. As a project progresses, tasks can be transferred from one manager to another manager and/or resource, with the transferring manager retaining varying levels of control over the delegation process, for example, from a strictly controlled approach to a flexible, highly collaborative approach. In operation, when a resource (delegator) delegates a task to another resource (delegatee), the delegator's client sends a delegation message to a server. In response to receiving the delegation message, the server forwards the new task ownership information to a database and also communicates the delegation information to the delegatee's client and the project manager client.

All of the claims stand rejected over Retallick. Retallick merely describes using a database to create, store and retrieve linked records to facilitate contact and activity management. (col. 1, line 66-col. 2, line 4). According to Retallick, users utilize a plurality of screens to enter data into named fields to create Activity, Contact and Topic records, which are stored in the database for later retrieval. (described at col. 2, line 41-col. 3, line 16, and shown in Figs. 5-10). The records in the database: are to be recalled and

reviewed by the users (col. 3, lines 26-28); can be retrieved for review by the users (col. 4, line 60); are retrievable by a user (col. 6, lines 29-30); and can be recalled and displayed by users (col. 7, line 35). In Retallick, when a task is delegated to a user, an Activity record is created and added to the user's ToDo List, allowing the user to view the list of the activities. (col. 4, lines 53-59; col. 6, lines 61-64). Thus, according to Retallick, the delegation is recorded by the creation and the addition of the Activity record to the user's ToDo List, and the user becomes aware of the delegation when the user calls up his/her ToDo List and displays the Activities in the list. (col. 9, lines 14-30).

Applicants herein amend these claims to explicitly recite that "the task delegation information is distinct from the record of the task delegation sent from the server to the storage medium," or similar language. In contrast, Retallick stores the assignment information in an Activity record in storage media for later retrieval (col. 3, lines 15-16), but does not send a distinct message informing of the assignment to assignee (i.e., the delegated client) and the project manager. In Retallick, the assignee recalls and reviews the stored Activity records. (col. 3, lines 19-27; col. 9, lines 26-29). Retallick neither discloses, suggests nor teaches a server sending the task delegation information to a delegated client and a project manager, where the task delegation information is distinct from the record of the task delegation sent to the storage medium. Applicants can find in Retallick no such disclosure or suggestion.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-18 are allowable and ask that this application be passed to allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8000.

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Respectfully submitted,

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